



A Message From The Secretary

The state of Kansas' health is improving! This is according to a new national report released this month showing a drop in the prevalence of smoking in Kansas, high access to adequate prenatal care, and a low incidence of infectious disease. And

while the infant mortality rate has been going up nationally, Kansas has seen a drop in this rate. Still we face the challenge of obesity that has increased nationally and affects nearly 23 percent of the Kansas population. But overall, the health of our nation has improved in the last decade with every state showing positive strides.

And speaking of positive strides, we are making several with our environment as well. This month as we celebrate America Recycles Day on November 15, Kansas will kick off two exciting pilot projects to improve our state. Our Bureau of Waste Management has been working with the City of Emporia and Seward County to launch an e-waste collection program for citizens of Lyon and Chase Counties and Seward County.

E-waste, such as old computers, televisions, cell phones, and VCRs, is currently going to Kansas landfills, but through these two pilot projects many of these items will be recycled. The lessons learned in the pilot projects will be used to formulate an appropriate statewide program in coming years. While e-waste is a growing concern, recycling other products such as aluminum cans and paper is still vital to improving our environment, so check in your local community to determine how you can participate in these efforts.

Flu season is here, and with a shortage of vaccine this year, it is imperative that every Kansan takes precautions this year to help prevent the spread of this virus, which can be extremely severe for some of our population including the elderly and the very young. KDHE has been working with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and local health departments to ensure available vaccine is redistributed to areas where a large number of high-risk individuals remain without vaccine. Recently six universities in the state agreed to sell 1,830 doses of vaccine to KDHE for redistribution to assist with the shortage. Healthy individuals are asked to forego the flu shot this year and everyone is asked to do their part to reduce the spread of influenza this year: wash your hands frequently with warm water and soap, cover your cough, stay home when you're sick, eat healthy and get plenty of rest.

KDHE is wrapping up its United Way campaign this month and to date employees have donated nearly \$14,000 to this worthwhile cause. Thank you for these contributions that will help so many needy individuals in your community.

Last month many employees attended the Town Hall Meetings held in Memorial Hall while others watched live. Thank you for your attention and participation. We will plan to do this again next year. Meanwhile, if you weren't able to make it to one of these sessions we will be posting information to the intranet soon, so please watch for additional details.

Please take time to honor our men and women on Veteran's Day. Have a wonderful Thanksgiving Holiday!

Be Well,